

Well-being can improve quickly by eating more fruit and vegetables, study finds

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Lifting your intake of fruit and vegetables can make a difference to the way you feel in just a couple of weeks, a University of Otago study has found.

A team of five academics, led by Dr Tamlin Conner of the Department

of Psychology, investigated the effects of increasing [fruit](#) and [vegetable consumption](#) on changes in psychological well-being.

Their study involved 171 [young adults](#) aged 18-25, split into three groups. Over a fortnight, they either continued eating as normal, or were encouraged by text reminders and pre-paid vouchers to eat more fruit and [vegetables](#), or were personally given two extra daily servings of fresh produce (carrots, kiwifruit, apples and oranges).

Those in the last group reported significant improvements to their [psychological well-being](#), with boosts in vitality and motivation.

However, those reminded by text and given \$10 vouchers did not show a similar improvement and, when surveyed, were found more likely to have eaten cooked vegetables in casseroles or mixed in with other meals.

The group given [fresh fruit](#) and vegetables mostly ate them uncooked.

The study has just been published in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

Dr Conner says it was encouraging that increased healthy eating could improve feelings of well-being in just two weeks.

"The message from this study is we should be giving people more fruits and vegetables to eat, not simply reminding people to eat their 5+ a day.

"People in dormitories, children in daycare centres, patients in hospitals, employees in the workplace, could be provided with fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis."

Further research would be needed to address whether eating more fresh produce might make differences to people's ill-being, including conditions—such as depression.

These changes might take longer to happen, Dr Conner says.

More information: Tamlin S. Conner et al. Let them eat fruit! The effect of fruit and vegetable consumption on psychological well-being in young adults: A randomized controlled trial, *PLOS ONE* (2017). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0171206](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0171206)

Provided by University of Otago

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